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Planning for a Daunting New Normal of Flood Risk.

Rainfall patterns are changing. What can local leaders do to curb the growing risks?

In Brief:

- Floods are the most common and expensive weather-related disaster.
- Changing rain patterns are increasing their frequency.
- A study by a Virginia sanitation district offers an example of infrastructure planning that takes climate into account.

The 10 warmest years since record-keeping began 150 years ago were all in the last decade. Warmer air absorbs more moisture, and this moisture is now more and more likely to come down in buckets, increasing the frequency and scale of flood risks to communities.

Climate impacts are making an already-bad situation worse, says Mami Hara, CEO of the nonprofit US Water Alliance. “We were already in a deep hole from underinvestment and systemic inequities of infrastructure investment and services,” Hara says.

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by Carl Smith

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